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President Obama ready for deal to avoid fiscal cliff



WASHINGTON (AFP) - US President Barack Obama yesterday offered opposition Republicans a short-term compromise on avoiding the fiscal cliff, but said any deal needed

Parliament unanimously approves new drugs laws



ORANIESTAD -- In a recent meeting this past week, Aruba's Parliament unanimously approved a new law for the installation of the Funds Forthcoming from Criminal Activity Account. And, a second law having to do with

physical body searches to be included in the new drugs law. These new laws are expected to benefit our legal authorities in our quest to combat criminality on Aruba. They provide agents with more instruments to help with prevention and repression of crimes, according to Minister of Justice, Arthur Dowers.

With respect to the preventive body searches for drugs and/or arms, this will be carried out in an organized fashion, giving police officers the authority, like is the case in Holland, to cordon off an area and frisk people who may be in the possession of illegal substances for trafficking and/or sale.

The Police Force has also established a professional K-9 Unit, which includes a special local training facility. They can now combine the K-9 team with the other police units. This will result in a much better approach with better results in our fight against drug trafficking on Aruba.

The Funds Forthcoming from Criminal Activity Account will come from monies confiscated during judicial actions which will be deposited to be used for combating crimes. These funds, which amount to about 100 thousand Aruban florins per year, formerly were sent to the Central Bank or to the General government's cashier. In the new fund, the monies will go directly back into projects and/or material for combating crime. It may also be possible to transfer funds from the justice budget to this account.

These funds will be available for 48 months, contrary to the government's budget, which is available for only year, January to December.

The Minister of Justice expressed satisfaction for the unanimous approval of Parliament for the two new laws. He considers these laws very important instruments in our fight against criminality.

to include tax increases for the rich.

Obama said he was willing to negotiate a fix before year-end to avoid the harsh tax hikes and spending cuts programmed for January 1, and then seek a comprehensive deal on long-term deficit reduction next year.

"We face a clear deadline that requires us to make some big decisions on jobs, taxes and deficits by the end of the year... As I've said before, I'm open to compromise and I'm open to new ideas," Obama said at his first press conference after being re-elected on November 6.

"Let's go ahead and lock that in. That will be good for the economy. It will be good for consumers. It will be good for businesses. It takes the edge off the fiscal cliff."

He said it was crucial to reach agreement within weeks on extending existing tax breaks for 98 percent of American households whose incomes are below \$250,000 a year, to avoiding forcing a steep consumer spending crunch from January 1.

Continued on page 6

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Social welfare substantially increased for the physically disabled

Old Aruba programmers never die, they just get together

ORANJESTAD -- Last week's protocol signed during the last National Social Dialogue entails various social laws to be introduced, which are slated to benefit those most vulnerable in our community. The agreements reached in that fifth Social Dialogue have yet to be ratified and approved by Parliament so as to become law and take effect.

One of the agreements is that the government will increase the welfare checks for persons physically disabled. This was a necessity as the physically handicapped had not received any adjustment in the support given them for many years. In 2010 they increased the welfare payouts by 25% for the employed and we increased the welfare payouts for those living in the same house of someone depending on welfare for their sustenance.

The difference between those who were receiving welfare checks who are not handicapped was great. Their income was only Afls.375. Hence the reason for beginning with an adjustment for this group of persons together with their children who were receiving a meager amount. Now, after many years, it was decided to increase the amount



by an additional Afls.100. As of January 1st, 2013, the welfare check for persons physically disabled will become Afls.935. per month. It's not a large sum, but does represent an adjustment of more than 10%.

Aruba currently has 1135 persons registered as physically disabled at the Department of Social Affairs. In that number there are those who are 100% disabled, there are also those who were not born with a handicap, but due to some accident have become handicapped. Then there are those who through some form of illness or accident are temporarily incapacitated and cannot work.



From L to R: Clyde Harms, Henflih Fradl, Bill Scholey, Pancho Ruiz, Carlito Croes.

Following a paraphrase of a saying made famous by General Mac Arthur in 1951, this week a group of four old computer programmers at different periods at Lago, met again to share memories of their programming years at the General Office Building where the computers were housed.

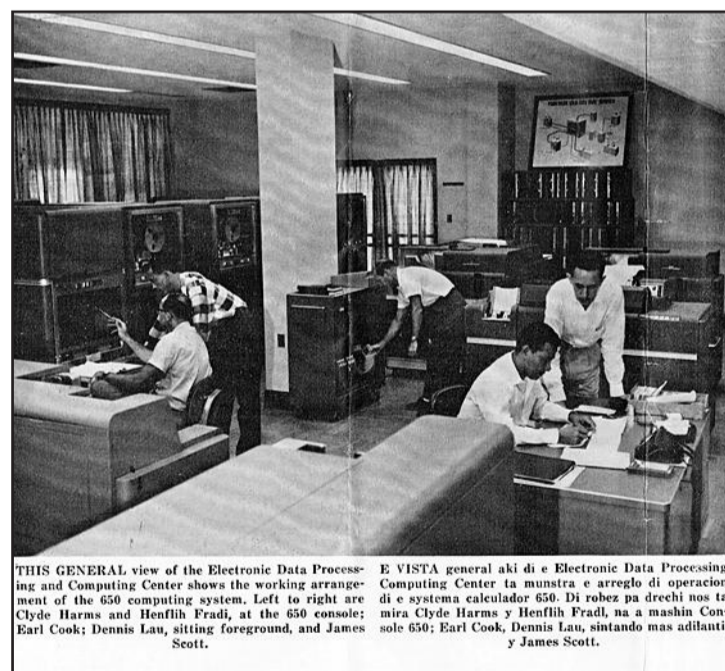
The occasion was the visit to Aruba of their Canadian friend, Bill Scholey, one of the IBM technicians who was responsible for the maintenance of Lago's computers. Bill Scholey worked on Aruba from 1957 to 1963 but returned on vacation on several occasions. His last visit to Aruba was in connection with a "Lago Reunion" six years ago.

The get-together took place at the home of Clyde Harms, the first Aruban programmer at Lago. The others who responded to the invitation were Henflih Fradl, "Pancho" Ruiz and Carlito Croes. A last moment hitch prevented Vivian Frank from also attending. Vi was one of the pioneers in the Tabulating Department.

While enjoying the Peruvian ceviche Mrs. Milagro Harms had prepared, all five

shared his experiences at different Esso and Exxon affiliates in the United States, Venezuela and Libya. Pancho and Carlito had more jokes than Bob Hope and many would make "The Aristocrats" sound like a kindergarten story. By the time the group were ready to go home they were all tired of laughing.

The serious part of the night was when Bill took out an old picture of the Lago workers he had known and asked what had become of them. On the picture of those that had deceased, Bill drew a



Esso News picture of 1958 shows Henflih Fradl and Clyde Harms at the console of the IBM650, the first computer to be used in Aruba.

opened their cache of anecdotes and jokes of their programming period. As the periods of the four programmers covered more than 30 years, beginning in 1956 and ending one year after Lago ceased operations, their stories were quite varied and involved many different personalities.

Bill recounted his career after he left Lago and Clyde

small cross. When they noted that most had received the cross, the five old friends realized that at their age, they themselves were candidates to receive one at any time. But full of optimism they exhorted each other to take care of their health and wished each other good health till the next "Old Programmers" meeting.

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Government honors life and legacy of Alicia Godett



Last Sunday, on the very date of her birth, the community of San Nicolas gathered to celebrate a special and historic moment. Family and friends witnessed the inauguration of the J. Van Stolbergstraat to the Alicia Godettstraat. The Prime Minister, who was present for the important occasion remarked... "It gives much satisfaction to realize that you can give something back for the dedication that Alicia gave to the community."

The occasion was a rather emotional one, as many of

those who knew Alicia Godett well, expressed words of personal joy as they described the joyful and positive person that Alicia was and as they recounted various anecdotes which reflected her character. The Prime Minister indicated that they were dedicating a street to a woman who has left a lot of emotions in our hearts and who guided many children in the barrio to lead productive lives.

The Prime Minister expressed the fact that dedicating



this street to one of our citizens is our way of bestowing honor and respect for what Alicia did for the community. To Alicia's daughter, Nicole, the Prime Minister remarked that she must always remember that she had the best mother anyone could have had.

Alicia will be remembered as a school teacher, a neighbor, a politician, or the mother of all the children in the barrio.

The name board bearing her name will remain for generations for all to know and later down the years to enquire as to who Alicia Godett was for all of San Nicolas and Aruba.



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Colombia to investigate Interbolsa brokerage over tax evasion

BOGOTA - Colombia will investigate if brokerage Interbolsa evaded taxes with a capital fund in Curacao, the finance minister said yesterday, in a deepening scandal involving the Andean country's largest stock brokerage.

Colombia is liquidating Interbolsa after the company failed to make a scheduled payment, forcing the central bank to inject cash into the economy and the government to repeat that it's a one-time case and not indicative of wider financial problems.

Finance Minister Mauricio

Cardenas told local radio that he had ordered an investigation into operations by Interbolsa and Curacao-listed investment fund Premium Capital, which has joint shareholders with the Colombian brokerage.

The financial market regulator essentially took over Interbolsa last week after it was unable to make a payment to a local bank due to a liquidity squeeze tied to repurchase agreements, or repos.

Interbolsa, with about 50,000 clients and one-third of daily operations on the stock market, also ceded control of its local bond portfolio to Bancolombia SA.

Market players have so far reacted with caution over Interbolsa's woes, agreeing it is probably an isolated case but also staying alert to any signs of a spillover to other financial institutions and contagion from perceived risk.

In a sign of more trouble to follow, experts said they could not rule out criminal cases against the company's management.

The investigations could have wider implications as far as how overseas investors see Colombia and the way its companies to operate.

Cas Animal Cont'd

Angels swoop down to see three Aruban street dogs find good homes

For followers of our Cas Animal Foundation series, we apologies for its absence for some time, but we now return with a wonderful story; very appropriate for the season. Angels came for a vacation on Aruba, and saw to the salvation of three Aruban street dogs, literally taking flight with these abandoned canines to give them happy lives in the U.S.

Cas Animal is a foundation dedicated to rescuing Aruba's abandoned and abused dogs and cats. Its founder, Kirsten Arndt, was instrumental in helping vacationers from Boston and Chicago return with Gabby, Edgar and Lady, three dogs they had befriended while here.

This is a complex tale, and will be told in two parts, the second to appear in tomorrow's paper. Two parties of complete strangers got connected through Cas Animal, and their love and compassion for dogs.

The first was Susan Swanson, vacationing with her family members Aaron and Kathy. Susan spend three weeks at Aruba Beach Club annually, and is well acquainted with the foundation and a contributor to Cas Animal. This year she donated proper gurneys which can be used for transporting sick and injured dogs. The foundation maintains an Animal Ambulance for this purpose.

Susan, Aaron and Kathy had fallen in love with Gabby, a dog hanging around their beach. Susan's sister, Deb, had just lost her two beloved dogs to old age, and they felt Gabby would be a perfect replacement, also comforted by knowing a sweet-natured beach dog would now have a good home. The entire family live close to each other in an expansive complex near Boston, and Gabby would get lots of love from many members.

Kiki and Contreras Veterinary Clinic assisted with the project, treating Gabby for

any minor ailments and seeing she was certified to return to the U.S. with Susan and her family. Unfortunately, Jet Blue does not take dogs in cargo, so Aaron arranged to travel back separately to the U.S. with Gabby via American Airlines, through Miami.

At the same time Susan and her family were falling in love with Gabby, three ladies staying at Playa Linda decided they couldn't leave Aruba without Lady, the beach dog they took in and cared for at their vacation apartment. Kiki helped Donna Rusch and Beverly Haas in having Lady checked out and treated at the vet. Unfortunately, she had to stay behind when Beverly, who finally adopted her, had to return to Chicago, Lady was not quite ready to travel. Her



Kathy, Aaron and Susan Swanson return to Boston with Gabby

of compassion and generosity. Stay tuned.

The mission and vision of Cas Animal is to build Aruba's first no-kill sanctuary for dogs. Kiki now cares for nearly 70 in her home, which she has converted into a temporary shelter. Her costs for feeding all the dogs she rescues and maintains are as-

tronomical, as well as her veterinary bills. She is close to breaking ground a proper shelter in Kibaima. If anyone wishes to help, they can support her with donations in the form of payment to the Cas Animal Foundation account at the Contreras Veterinary Clinics or to Animal Care Clinic in Paradera, phone number 582-8382. Donations can be made directly to the foundation's account: Cas Animal

Foundation, CMB Bank account # 25762110. If you are not an island resident and wish to adopt a dog, or see one in distress, call Kiki at 742-8732 and she will help you as she helped the Swanson and Beverly; more on this poignant rescue in tomorrow's edition of THE MORNING NEWS.

Rosalie Klein



Donna Rusch, Beverly Haas and friend with Lady

plight, and the decision by Susan, Kathy and Aaron to return to Boston with another dog they found, Edgar, resulted in the two groups connecting for this rescue operation.

We will continue with the journey of Edgar and Lady tomorrow, for dog lover's who enjoy a happy ending and a great Christmas story



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Obama defends Rice over Benghazi attacks

WASHINGTON (AFP) - President Barack Obama yesterday angrily hit out at Republicans gunning for the US ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, who is under fire over the militant attack on the US mission in Libya.

Refusing to say if he planned to pick her to replace Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Obama defended Rice, saying she had done "exemplary work" at the UN showing "skill and professionalism and toughness and grace."

Rice has been widely criticized after she said only days after the September 11 attack on the Benghazi consulate that according to the current intelligence it had started with a spontaneous protest against an anti-Islam film.

The Obama administration has since acknowledged that the attack, in which ambassador Chris Stevens and three other US staff were killed, was carried out by militants linked to Al-Qaeda.

"She gave her best understanding of the intelligence that had been provided to her," the president insisted, training his fire on Republican lawmakers. "For them to go after the UN ambassador who had nothing to do with Benghazi, and was simply making a presentation based on intelligence that she had received, and to besmirch her reputation is outrageous."

Obama, appearing at his first press conference since his re-election last week, also said Rice had appeared on the Sunday talk shows following the attack at the request of the White House.

Rice is reported to be one of the top favorites to be the new secretary of state, as Clinton has made it clear she is stepping down.

But Republicans have pre-saged a tough battle in the Senate, where she would need 60 votes to be confirmed as America's next top diplomat.

"I will do everything in my power to block her from being the United States Secretary of State," Republican Senator John McCain said on Fox News Wednesday.

Obama hit back angrily yesterday: "If Senator McCain and Senator Graham and others want to go after somebody, they should go after me. And I'm happy to have that discussion with them."

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Obama says no security threat from Petraeus scandal

WASHINGTON (AFP) - President Barack Obama assured Americans yesterday that the sex scandal that brought down CIA chief David Petraeus and ensnared another top general has not compromised national security.

Petraeus, the most celebrated US general of his generation credited with turning around the war in Iraq, resigned last week to pre-empt revelations of an affair with biographer Paula Broadwell, a married army reservist.

The US commander in Afghanistan, General John

Allen, is still under investigation over mails he sent a Florida socialite who blew open the affair when she complained to an FBI agent of threatening emails from Broadwell.

The scandal has rocked the Washington security establishment but, beyond any personal failings it may have revealed, Obama said he had seen no evidence it had harmed the security of the nation or its troops.

"I have no evidence at this point from what I have seen that classified information was disclosed that in any way

would have a negative impact on our national security," he told his first news conference after his re-election.

"General Petraeus had an extraordinary career," he said. "But by his own assessment, he did not meet the standards that he felt were necessary as the director of the CIA with respect to this personal matter."

Petraeus is due to testify to Congress later this week on the September 11 assault in Benghazi, Libya, which killed four Americans including US ambassador Chris Stevens and two former Navy SEALs

working for the CIA.

Lawmakers have accused the FBI of withholding information about the inquiry from congressional oversight committees, but Obama told reporters he could not interfere in the investigations under way, and would await their conclusions.

"I am withholding judgment with respect to how the entire process surrounding General Petraeus came up," he said.

"And we don't have all the information yet. But I want to say I have a lot of confidence generally in the FBI."

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Toyota to pay \$25.5 million to shareholders hit by recalls

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Toyota has agreed to pay \$25.5 million to shareholders who lost money after the Japanese automaker's stock price plummeted in the wake of a series of mass recalls, court records showed.

The settlement was filed hours before Toyota announced a global recall of 2.77 million vehicles over water pump or steering problems yesterday, in the latest blow to the firm's reputation after a spate of earlier call backs.

The firm last month issued a huge global recall of 7.43 million vehicles, including its popular Camry and Corolla models, over a possible fire

risk tied to a fault in its electric windows.

Earlier this year it added two models to a controversial 2009 recall launched after floor mats became trapped under the accelerator, which was linked to accidents that allegedly caused dozens of deaths.

Toyota's mishandling of the initial problem and other reports of sudden, unintended acceleration led to the recall of more than 12 million vehicles worldwide, a US congressional probe, more than \$50 million in fines from US regulators and public apologies by its chief.

Petraeus to testify to Senate today

WASHINGTON (AFP) - CIA ex-director David Petraeus will testify today before the Senate intelligence committee, Senator John McCain said, confirming reports that the fallen general would appear this week before Congress.

The general had been summoned to Washington to testify in several closed-door hearings this week on the deadly September 11 attack on the US consulate in Benghazi, Libya, prior to his sudden resignation last week.

The sudden scandal, in which investigators discovered Petraeus had an affair with a military reservist who wrote

his biography, had thrown his participation into question.

Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein, chair of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, told CNN she expected Petraeus would agree to testify at a later date, adding that she had seen nothing to link the sex scandal to Benghazi.

A close McCain ally, Senator Lindsey Graham, also said Petraeus had indicated he would appear before the intelligence committee, but did not provide a date.

US media have reported that Petraeus would testify to Congress on Friday.

Obama ready for deal to avoid fiscal cliff

Continued from page 1

But he said that similar tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans should expire, a point which many Republicans have rejected.

"We should not hold the middle class hostage while we debate tax cuts for the wealthy," he said.

"We cannot afford to extend the Bush tax cuts for the wealthy."

The fiscal cliff comprises a poison-pill law agreed by Republicans and Democrats in August 2011 that forces harsh budget cuts from January 1, and the expiration of tax cuts originally designed as temporary measures to boost economic growth.

If both take place, economists say they could suck as much as \$600 billion out of the economy next year and force it into recession.

The spending cuts could force temporary furloughs of government workers and also

decimate key parts of the US defense budget.

Obama appeared to agree with the Republican leader of the House of Representatives, Speaker John Boehner, who yesterday proposed the two sides carve out a short-term compromise to mitigate the worst effects of the cliff, and then open talks on long-term deficit reduction next year.

But Boehner proposed that the government only seek more revenues from the wealthy by removing special breaks they receive in the tax code, not by letting the tax breaks for them expire.

Obama dismissed that approach as unlikely to have much impact on the US deficit, which has topped \$1 trillion a year for four straight years.

"It's very difficult to see how you make up that trillion dollars if we're serious about deficit reduction, just by closing

ing loopholes and deductions. The math tends not to work," he said.

Obama said talks next year could cover government spending, a rewrite of the tax code, and politically sensitive modifications to Social Security and Medicare programs that are the largest long-term challenges to government spending.

"We can then set up a structure whereby we're dealing with tax reform, closing deductions, closing loopholes, simplifying, dealing with entitlements," Obama said.

"And I'm ready and willing to make big commitments to make sure that we're locking in the kind of deficit reductions that stabilize our deficit, start bringing it down, start bringing down our debt."

"I want a big deal. I want a comprehensive deal," he said.



NEW YORK: AFP photo shows people waiting in line yesterday to receive free food from a charity in the heavily damaged Rockaway neighborhood where a large section of the iconic boardwalk was washed away. Two weeks after Superstorm Sandy slammed into parts of New York and New Jersey, thousands are still without power and heat. Despite days of dire forecasts and explicit warnings, hundreds of thousands of people in New York and New Jersey ignored mandatory evacuation orders as Superstorm Sandy closed in. Now, after scores of deaths and harrowing escapes, emergency officials will look at what more can be done to persuade residents to get out when their lives are in danger. Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz said officials should work to make sure residents can feel safe in shelters and confident their homes will be safeguarded in their absence.

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INTERNATIONAL NEWS

US names 2 Guatemalans as drug traffickers

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States singled out two members of the notorious Guatemalan Lorenzana family for fresh sanctions yesterday, saying they took part in the group's work with Mexico's Sinaloa drug cartel.

Ovaldino Lorenzana Cordon, 44, and Marta Julia Lorenzana Cordon, 37, both children of alleged Guatemalan trafficking kingpin Waldeemar Lorenzana Lima, were listed for financial and commercial sanctions for their role in the operation.

Both were officially branded "specially designated narcotics traffickers" for their

alleged roles in the drug trafficking activities of their father, Lorenzana Lima, the US Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control said in a statement. Also listed under the sanctions were eight businesses tied to the family.

The Treasury said the Lorenzana group "plays a key role" in moving cocaine from Colombia to Mexico's Sinaloa drug cartel, which then smuggles it into the United States.

The new sanctions freeze any assets the individuals and businesses might have in US jurisdictions, and forbid US citizens from doing any business with them.

Clashes erupt in Europe anti-austerity protests

MADRID (AFP) - Riot police and anti-austerity protesters clashed in Spain and Italy yesterday as unions rallied millions of workers to a day of Europe-wide strikes and rallies.

General strikes in Spain and Portugal spearheaded an unprecedented coordinated protest across the continent, paralysing swathes of industry and hitting road, rail and air transport.

"Europe is waking up today -- from Rome to Madrid to Athens," said Mario Nobile, a 23-year-old university student in Rome.

Workers staged industrial walkouts in Italy, the eurozone's number three economy, and in Greece, which is fighting to avert bankruptcy despite bowing to demands for new, sweeping austerity measures.

The European Trade Union Confederation behind the "Day of Action and Solidarity" said it was the first time it had organised such strike action in four countries in Europe.

The strike coincides with heated debate over the pursuit of austerity policies in the midst of recession.

The International Monetary Fund admitted last month that it had underestimated the extent to which such measures brake economic growth, opening the way to relaxed deficit-cutting targets in countries such as Portugal.

Most of the protests were peaceful. But police charged demonstrators with batons in Spain, where unions claimed millions of workers had joined the general strike, and running street battles erupted in Italy.

Spanish unions said participation in the strike was massive, surpassing 85 percent in some industrial sectors, but the government said the impact was more modest.

In the main rally in the evening, tens of thousands

spilled into Madrid's streets, spreading around the main Atocha railway station and near the lower house of parliament, which was sealed off by riot police.

"We have the solution, send the bankers to prison!", protesters chanted amid a sea of union flags.

But Spain's Economy Minister Luis de Guindos said the strike was "not the right path" to reduce uncertainty and insisted that austerity was the only way out of the crisis.

In Italy, 17 police officers were wounded in clashes as tens of thousands of students and workers took to the streets of Rome, Milan, Turin and around 100 other towns and cities, calling for more safeguards for jobs and pensions and protesting against Prime Minister Mario Monti.

Italian unions called a four-hour walkout, leading to the closure of schools, ports and

many factories.

In Portugal, the general strike brought Lisbon's metro service to a halt while ferries across the River Tagus and trains across the country ran skeleton services.

Both Portugal and Spain have legislation guaranteeing minimum services in essential industries.

But in Spain, Iberia, Iberia Express, Air Nostrum, Vueling, Air Europa and easyJet cut more than 600 flights including some 250 international routes. Ryanair said no flights had been scrapped yet.

Portugal's TAP said it was grounding more than 170 flights, most of them international.

Thousands of people took to the streets in cities across France, protesting at salary cuts, tax hikes and spending cuts in the eurozone's second biggest economy.



A young man and a woman enjoy swimming in flooded St. Mark's Square in Venice, Italy. Flooding struck the northern outskirts of Rome yesterday after heavy rains in central Italy swelled the Tiber River, as the historic city of Venice and popular tourist regions of Tuscany and Umbria counted the costs of extensive flood damage.

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WOLSELEY : Fruit bins burn at a packing store in Wolseley yesterday, about 120Km North of Cape Town, South Africa. The fire, which burnt more than 15000 wooden bins is thought to be connected to the farmworkers strike. South African police said yesterday one person was killed and five others injured as protests by farm workers demanding higher pay descended into violence, prompting calls for the military to be deployed. A week-long protest by farm workers spilled over into bloodshed with chilling echoes of recent mining unrest that has claimed more than 50 lives. (AFP PHOTO)

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HEALTH & LIVING

Ireland abortion refusal death sparks legal debate

DUBLIN (AFP) - Ireland's tough abortion laws came under fire on Wednesday following the death of an Indian woman who was allegedly refused a termination after doctors told her it was a Catholic country.

Prime Minister Enda Kenny told lawmakers he was awaiting the results of two investigations of the death of Savita Halappanavar, who is originally from India, at University Hospital Galway in western Ireland.

Abortion is illegal in Roman Catholic-dominated Ireland except when it is necessary to save the life of the mother.

Halappanavar, who was 17 weeks pregnant, repeatedly asked the hospital to terminate her pregnancy because she had severe back pain and was miscarrying, her family said.

But staff had told the 31-year-old dentist, a Hindu, that she could not have an abortion because Ireland was a Catholic country and the foetus was still alive, her husband Praveen told the Irish Times.

"Savita was really in

agony. She was very upset, but she accepted she was losing the baby," he told the newspaper by telephone from the Karnataka region of southern India.

"When the consultant came on the ward rounds on Monday morning Savita asked if they could not save the baby could they induce to end the pregnancy. The consultant said, 'As long as there is a foetal heartbeat we can't do anything.'

"Again on Tuesday morning, the ward rounds and the same discussion. The consultant said it was the law, that this is a Catholic country. Savita said: 'I am neither Irish nor Catholic' but they said there was nothing they could do."

She died of septicaemia, or blood poisoning, on October 28, a week after she was admitted. The foetus had been removed on October 23 after its heartbeat stopped.

The hospital said in a statement that it had ordered a review into Savita Halappanavar's death but it had not yet started as it was waiting to consult with the Halappanavar family, who are in India for her funeral.

No cognitive decline for women with migraines: study



WASHINGTON (AFP) - Women suffering from migraines are more likely to experience changes to their brain tissue, though these do not appear to cause long-term damage to their mental condition, a study said Tuesday.

The study of 286 women and men, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, showed that women with migraines were more likely to have brain changes that appeared as bright spots on magnetic resonance imaging.

Previous studies have found a link between the bright spots known as hypersensitivities and risk factors for atherosclerotic disease, increased risk of stroke and cognitive decline.

"An important message from the study is that there seems no need for more aggressive treatment or prevention of attacks," said Mark Kruit, a principal investigator for the study who is also a neuroradiologist from Leiden University Medical Center in the Netherlands, which led the study.

Unlike women, men with migraines had no greater incidence of brain changes than other men without migraines of the same age.

Polio cases down worldwide, trouble spots remain

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The number of polio cases worldwide reached a record low in 2012, giving experts confidence that the disease can finally be eradicated, according to presentations made Tuesday at a major US conference.

Just 177 cases were recorded globally through October 2012, down from 502 during the same period last year, said virologists attending the annual meeting of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in Atlanta.

But the experts said challenges in the fight against polio remain, citing a doubling this year of the number of cases in Nigeria, and persistent difficulties in Pakistan.

Pakistan, Nigeria and Afghanistan are the only countries where polio remains endemic. Experts are trying to eliminate polio from those places, making it only the second disease after smallpox to be completely eradicated.

Steven Wassilak, a polio expert at the US Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention, said new data from Pakistan shows that one of the two types of wild polio virus prevalent in the South Asian country is close to being wiped out.

"There have not been any Type 3 cases reported for six months, which is the longest gap in incidence there to date," Wassilak said, according to a press release.

But Anita Zaidi, a pediatrician at Aga Khan University in the Pakistani city of Karachi, said wary parents are still refusing to allow their children to take part in vaccination drives -- a problem that is not easily solved.

"That is a big challenge and not something that can be overcome only by expanding immunization campaigns," Zaidi said, while noting the progress made in bringing vaccinations to rural communities.

Zaidi said Karachi was the only large city in the world that had failed to stamp out polio transmission, and condemned the killing of a health worker in the city involved in a vaccination drive.

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SCI-TECH

Samsung plans no settlement with Apple: executive

SEOUL (AFP) - A top Samsung executive said Wednesday that the South Korean electronics giant had no plans to follow Taiwanese firm HTC in seeking a settlement over its patent disputes with arch-rival Apple.

Samsung and Apple are currently embroiled in patent lawsuits in 10 nations including the United States and Germany, accusing each other of stealing design and technology.

HTC, which had been locked in similar suits with Apple around the world, announced Sunday that the two companies had reached a deal to end all outstanding litigation and sign a 10-year licensing agreement over patents.

"We have no such intention," J.K. Shin, the head of Samsung Electronics' mobile

unit, told reporters when asked if Samsung would seek a similar settlement.

Samsung -- the world's top mobile and smartphone maker -- was ordered by a US jury in August to pay Apple \$1.05 billion in damages for illegally copying iPhone and iPad features for its flagship Galaxy S smartphones.

It has appealed the ruling. Since then, two separate rulings by courts in Japan and the Netherlands have dismissed Apple's claims of patent infringement.

Shin also said Wednesday that Samsung expected fourth-quarter smartphone sales to be as strong as the third quarter, when its newest Galaxy S3 device became the world's top-selling smartphone.

Petraeus case fuels fresh debate on online privacy

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The investigation that toppled CIA chief David Petraeus has sparked fresh debate over online privacy and the government's ability to snoop into private email accounts.

"When the CIA director cannot hide his activities online, what hope is there for the rest of us?" said Chris Soghoian of the American Civil Liberties Union's Privacy and Technology Project. "This should also serve as a warning, by demonstrating the extent to which the government can pierce the veil of communications anonymity without ever having to obtain a search warrant or other court order from a neutral judge."

Petraeus resigned last week when it became clear that his affair with 40-year-old military reservist Paula

Broadwell, his biographer, would become public.

"It is troubling because we don't know what permissions were granted," said James Lewis, head of the Technology and Public Policy Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Lewis said it was unclear if Broadwell was made aware of her rights, before agreeing to allow FBI agents to access her emails.

He said even spy agencies such as the National Security Agency, when hunting for terrorists, must meet "very precise legal conditions" before obtaining email access.

"We need to be clear on the rules for looking at emails without a warrant. The basic rule should be no court approval, no investigation," Lewis said.

Lonely planet: Orphan world spotted in deep space

PARIS (AFP) - Astronomers on Wednesday reported they had detected a planet that had strayed from its star system and was wandering alone in deep space.

Object CFBDSIR2149 is believed to be a cold, young world that for unknown reasons has pulled free of the gravitational pull of its mother star, the European Southern Observatory (ESO) said.

It is not the first time that a "free-floating" planet has been found, but this one is the closest that has ever been spotted, at over 100 light years from Earth.

Initial observations sketched the object as either

a homeless planet or a tiny failed star called a brown dwarf, which lacks the bulk to trigger the nuclear fusion that makes stars shine.

But the probabilities narrowed when the astronomers noted it was roaming near a stream of young, restless stars called the AB Doradus Moving Group.

"This group is unique, in that it is made up of around 30 stars that all have the same age, have the same composition and that move together through space," said astrophysicist Lison Malo at the University of Montreal.

"It's the link between the planet and AB Doradus that enabled us to deduce its age

and classify it as a planet."

The astronomers used an infrared camera at the Canada-France-Hawaii Telescope and ESO's 8.2-metre (28.7-foot) Very Large Telescope in Chile, ranked the sixth biggest optical telescope in the world, to get a closer look.

CFBDSIR2149, they estimate, is between 50 and 120 million years old, with a temperature of around 400 degrees Celsius (750 degrees Fahrenheit) and a mass of four to seven times that of Jupiter, the biggest planet of our solar system.

"These objects are important, as they can either help us understand more about

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WHAT A VISION

ACROSS

1. Overwhelmed
5. "We ____ You a Merry Christmas"
9. Sandwich counter order
12. Actress Lange
13. Song at the Met
14. Yes: Fr.
15. Emulate a fish
16. Pooh-pooh
18. Female collegians, once
20. Outfits for barre belles
21. Pig sound
23. ____ Arthur Conan Doyle
24. Bireme need

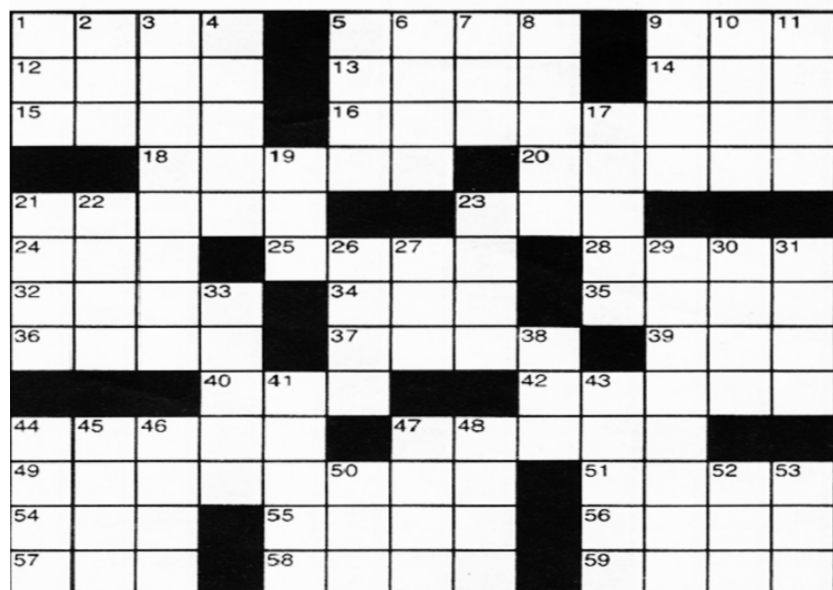
25. "Rum and ____ Cola"
28. Flows back
32. "Right up" preceder
34. Nessen or Howard
35. Thailand, once
36. "____ Rebel"
37. "Tiny Toons" dodo
39. Actor Gulager
40. Adjudicate
42. Dressing vessel
44. One of the Pointer Sisters
47. Choir singers
49. Salon offering
51. It often

54. Where Mork and Mindy honeymooned
55. He is, in Iquique
56. Ike's better half, once
57. Method: abbr.
58. Escritoire
59. Adam's abode

DOWN

1. Exclamations
2. Thunder-struck exclamation
3. Gourmands
4. Incubus
5. June Cleaver's hubby

6. Colored part of the eye
7. Comic Caesar
8. Poor Caribbean nation
9. Match
10. Beaut
11. Connections
17. Heals
19. Common abbr.
21. "Gee whiz!"
22. Degree
23. Worked as a cantor
26. Bacchanalia
27. Dove's murmur
29. Premolar
30. Christian of "American Psycho"
31. Crude stuff
33. Tony winner LuPone
38. Calendar abbr.
41. Drove in the Indy 500
43. Artery
44. Biblical prophet
45. Not any, down home
46. Printing fluids
47. Linkletter and Garfunkel
48. Disclose sensitive info
50. Practice
52. Countdown ending
53. Bobbsey girl



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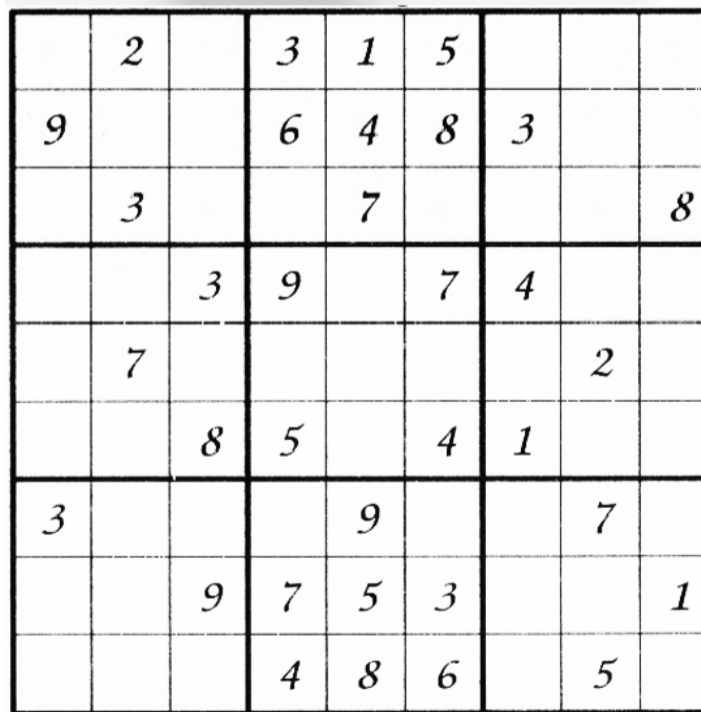
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Sudoku



SOLUTION

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
3	1	2	9	8	7	6	5	4
4	5	6	3	2	1	9	8	7
2	7	8	4	3	9	1	6	5
6	9	5	1	7	2	4	3	8
8	3	4	2	6	9	5	1	7
7	6	9	8	1	5	3	4	2
5	4	1	7	3	2	8	9	6

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9. A number is Never repeated in a row or column. In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9.

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Bank of England cuts 2013 growth forecast amid euro crisis

LONDON (AFP) - The Bank of England cut its forecast for British economic expansion yesterday and predicted low growth for the next three years due to the eurozone crisis, tight credit conditions and inflationary pressures.

Gross domestic product (GDP) expansion was predicted to average 1.0 percent in 2013, the central bank said in its latest quarterly report. That compared with the previous forecast of around 2.0 percent which was given in August.

The BoE also warned that economic output would remain below pre-financial crisis levels for at least the next three years, holding underneath its historical average in a "sustained but slow" recovery until mid-2015.

The central bank laid much of the blame at the door of the unresolved sovereign debt crisis in the eurozone, which is Britain's key trading partner.

Adding to the gloom, governor Mervyn King declared that activity could shrink again in the fourth quarter of 2012, having surged by 1.0 percent in the previous three months to escape from a double dip recession.

In reaction to the news, sterling sank in afternoon deals to \$1.5840 -- which was the lowest level since September 5. It also hit a near two-week trough against the euro.

The BoE also forecast that consumer prices index (CPI) annual inflation would fall back towards the government's 2.0-percent target in the second half of 2013, later than previously thought.

In slightly better news yesterday, official data showed Britain's unemployment rate had dipped to 7.8 percent in the quarter to the end of September.

Britain sank into the first phase of a double dip recession in 2008 as a result of the devastating global financial crisis that sparked a number of vast banking bailouts.



Held back by a struggling world economy and the failure to create commercial conditions which stimulate more green investment, the report by the Global Wind Energy Council and Greenpeace International expected growth of wind power would not accelerate again until after 2020.
(PHOTO: AFP)

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

A	L	S		O	L	D		P	I	G
Y	A	K		F	E	E	S	F	A	D
E	L	Y		T	E	S	T	P	I	L
S	A	D	D	E	R		A	R	R	
				I	O	N		C	L	I
D	I	V	E					L	E	D
O	D	E		S	H	A	R	E	T	E
E	E	R		E	O	S		E	R	S
R	E	S	E	N	T	S		M	O	O
A	E	R	I	A	L	I	S	T		
I	R	O	N		S	W	I	T		
D	A	Y			O	S	S		T	A

Finance

US report warns over China state firms

WASHINGTON (AFP) - A US commission yesterday urged lawmakers to consider tighter rules on investment by Chinese state-owned firms, warning that they may pose economic as well as security risks.

In an annual report to Congress, the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission also called for efforts to bring China into arms reduction talks due to Beijing's growing expenditure on its opaque weapons programs.

Chinese investment abroad has soared over the past decade. The commission concluded that the world's second largest economy will likely look to acquire US companies as it diversifies its more than \$3 trillion in foreign reserves.

William Reinsch, the vice chairman of the commission, said that companies in the state sector -- which accounts for up to half the Chinese economy -- may enjoy unfair advantages through lower costs for labor and financing, as well as preferences in winning contracts

at home.

"While foreign investment in America is generally viewed positively because it creates jobs by adding productivity-enhancing capital to skilled US labor, there may be some exceptions to the general rule," he told reporters.

The commission, whose recommendations are not binding, called for Congress to consider adding economic considerations to a 37-year-old system in which the United States can block foreign investments for security reasons.

The commission also recommended that Congress increase the disclosure requirements for state-owned companies that seek to be listed on US stock exchanges.

The report comes one month after the House Intelligence Committee urged that Chinese telecom firms Huawei and ZTE be excluded from US government contracts and acquisitions, warning that their equipment could be used for spying.

Daily Exchange Rates

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U.S.A.	USD	1.77	1.78
Dutch Antilles	ANG	98.00	100.00
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Britain	GBP	2.76	2.81
Switzerland	CHF	188.08	188.80
Netherlands	EUR	224.61	226.66
Sweden	SEK	25.29	26.01
Denmark	DKK	29.42	30.14
Norway	NOK	29.99	30.71
Japan	JPY	220.20	222.21

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EU commissioner says Spain off the fiscal hook for now

BRUSSELS (AFP) - The European Commission yesterday took some pressure off Spain by saying it would not require more austerity measures this year and next even if Madrid is unable to meet budget commitments.

"The Commission's view is that no further steps in the excessive deficit procedure of Spain are needed at present," European Economic Affairs Commissioner Olli Rehn told a press conference in Brussels. Spain has taken effective

action for 2012 and 2013, he said, while warning that "the measures announced so far for 2014 fall short of what is required by the revised Council recommendation," Rehn added.

He referred to a recommendation by the European Council, which comprises the heads of state or government of the EU member states.

"There are also risks of more budgetary slippages" by autonomous Spanish regions, Rehn added.

Indian diamond fetches record price at Geneva auction



GENEVA (AFP) - The flawless 'Archduke Joseph' diamond, from India's famous Golconda mines, broke several world records when it was sold at auction in Geneva late Tuesday for \$21.47 million (16.9 million euros).

The price which the 76 carat jewel fetched at the Christie's sale is a record for the auction of a clear, colourless diamond.

It is also the highest auction price per carat for such a gem and the record for a Golconda diamond, the same mines which produced the Koh-i-Noor which adorns the British Queen's crown.

"It's a cushion-shaped diamond, weighing 76.02 carats, of D colour" the purest, most colourless variety of diamond, a rarity and a speciality of the ancient Golconda mines in the

Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, said Christie's jewellery expert Jean-Marc Lunel.

The 'Archduke Joseph,' which was bought by an anonymous bidder, once belonged to the Habsburgs, former rulers of the Austrian empire.

It takes its name from the Archduke Joseph (1872-1962) who was for a short period the Hungarian head of state.

The diamond was sold in 1936 to a still-anonymous buyer and, hidden in a safe, escaped the attentions of the Nazis during the Second World War.

It reappeared on the international scene at a sale in London in 1961.

In the 1990s it was sold again, in Geneva, for \$6.5 million.

People declares actor Tatum 2012's sexiest man alive



New York (AFP) - People magazine on Wednesday de-

clared Hollywood actor Channing Tatum the "sexiest man alive" in 2012.

A muscular 32-year-old former model, Tatum has appeared in "G.I. Joe: The Rise of Cobra," "21 Jump Street," and "Magic Mike," among other films.

Upon hearing he had been picked for the annual honor, Tatum was modest, the gossip magazine said.

"Y'all are messing with me," it quoted him as saying.

His wife, Jenna Dewan-Tatum, told the magazine that her husband sculpts and likes to quote 19th century author and poet Edgar Allan Poe, as well as offer her massages.

Previous laureates of People's award include actors George Clooney, Matt Damon and Brad Pitt.



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Morocco's 'liquid gold' enriches Berber women

TIDZI, Morocco (AFP) - In a poor but fertile corner of southern Morocco, illiterate Berber women are tapping the surge in global demand for argan oil, a "miracle" product they grind from a special nut, that is helping to lift them out of poverty.

Sometimes known as "liquid gold" or "miracle oil" for its rich cosmetic, culinary and medicinal properties, the exclusively Moroccan export has caused a sensation in the West, where it is touted as a unique hair care and anti-ageing skin potion.

The rolling countryside between Essaouira and Agadir, resort towns better known for their Atlantic surf, is covered with argan trees, and distinguished by the bizarre sight of goats perched in their branches munching away on the pulp of the nut.

Another striking feature of the landscape is the profusion of cooperatives that employ Berber women to produce the oil, from the tree to the bottle, and sell it as far afield as Canada and Japan, sharing the profits.

Indigenous, non-Arab Berber people make up a large portion of the local population.

Zahra Knabo, who runs the Ajddigue cooperative, one of the very first, says there are now 137 of them, and hails the "evolution" they have brought to the region's Berber women who suffer from



widespread illiteracy, poor health care and stifling social mores.

"In this rural area, women would traditionally herd the animals and gather wood from the forest. They were the first to wake up and the last to go to bed," says Knabo.

"Now most of the women working in the cooperative have money in their pockets. Some have completely financed their houses. They've been able to get electricity, televisions and fridges," she says.

When it opened in 1996, Ajddigue had 16 employees and produced 200 litres (52 gallons) of oil monthly.

But around 60 women now work there, Knabo says, and monthly production has risen to 1,000 litres, with an annual

turnover last year of four million dirhams (360,000 euros, \$460,000).

Reflecting argan oil's growing popularity in the cosmetics industry, the group's two biggest clients are French and Italian, while the nearby Kaouki cooperative says its main customer, a British firm, started buying the oil in 2009.

Scientific proof of the oil's unique healing properties is elusive, but leading aromatherapists argue that, with its richness in fatty acids, antioxidants and vitamin E, it is a highly effective treatment for damaged skin and dry hair.

The economic crisis has taken its toll on demand this year, with both cooperatives seeing their big European clients cutting by half their orders of the luxury commodity, which sells for between 250 and 400 dirhams a litre.

Competition from the growing number of producers has, meanwhile, left smaller associations like the Tawount cooperative, which opened in July and employs 15 Berber women, struggling to sell their products.

Argan products range from cooking and cosmetic oil, to hand cream, honey and "amlou" -- a sweet, nutty paste made with almonds -- while the pulp is used as nutritious animal feed, and the shells burned as fuel for cooking.

La Linda Department Store-where Aruba shops!



Calman and Anna Hochman

Though Aruba has its share of designer brand stores and shopping malls, ask almost any islander where they shop, and they will likely tell you "La Linda." Spread out over several specialty stores on the Caya Betico Croes, La Linda was Aruba's first and foremost department stores, where, for decades, one could find anything and everything, and after more than 70 years, still can make that claim.

It is also a distinctly family operation, with the personal touch and supervision of the Hochmans, who take their reputation for stocking "the best quality for the best price" very seriously. It all started with Calman Hochman, a Jewish Polish immi-

To this day, La Linda is particularly known for its huge fabrics and notions department, the first destination for many on an island where making your own clothes is still an everyday practice. Without question, the store offers the greatest diversity of selection in nearly every department, and they have now consolidated them all into one store; four floors containing a wealth of choices in clothing for men, women and children, house wares, bedding, sporting goods, luggage, shoes, jewelry, decorative items and more.



Comfortable lounges for companions while shopping a vast selection

"The present store is a work in progress," asserts

ovate and enlarge what had been only the men's store and warehouse in the past. Normally closed for a 2 hour lunch/siesta in the old island way, shoppers will soon find it open daily for the entire day, from 9:30 AM to 6:30 PM, as they are on Saturday's, with a bright, charming eatery installed on the top floor.

La Linda is continually expanding their inventory, with their acquisitions department continually seeking out interesting, unique, and moderately priced goods from all over the world, always

with an eye towards quality. They pay particular attention to their Women's Department specializing in over-sized garments, stocking larger sizes exhibiting distinctive dash and style.

For travelers who have perhaps lost their luggage, they can offer a quick fix for all the family which won't break your budget, including some very stylish new suitcases.

A visit to La Linda and perusal of their interesting collection will make anyone understand why it has remained successful all these decades, and is still Aruba's favorite place to shop!



Unique, quality goods in all departments

grant who opened his first small shop with his Aruban wife Anna, carrying "a little bit of everything that anyone could need." This was before WWII, when the present head of the company, Jaime, hadn't even been born yet. Many of their sales help have also been with the store for over two decades, and "it is very much like family here," he admits. Their loyal patrons also look forward to being helped by shop girls who have become friends, knowing they will get great and honest service.



Jaime, as they continue to ren-

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SPORTS

Holland held to a goalless draw by Germany



Dirk Kuyt of Netherlands reacts during the international friendly soccer match against Germany

AMSTERDAM (AFP) - Holland were held to a goalless draw by neighbours Germany in Wednesday's international friendly with both injury-hit teams fielding make-shift sides after a raft of withdrawals.

With both nations top of their respective World Cup qualifying groups and missing several stars, an experimental theme ran through both line-ups at Amsterdam Arena, but there was little to

light up a fairly dull encounter.

With Germany having beaten Holland 2-1 in their group stage clash at Euro 2012 and the Dutch having lost 3-0 in Hamburg last November in a friendly, the Dutch were well placed to take advantage of a weakened Germany.

But the hosts failed to take their chance for a first win over the Germans since November 2002.

Dutch coach Louis van Gaal opted to give Ajax goalkeeper Kenneth Vermeer his debut while Fenerbahce striker Dirk Kuyt captained the Netherlands.

The Germany-based trio of Arjen Robben, Rafael van der Vaart and Ibrahim Afellay led a strong forward line, with Schalke 04 striker Klaas-Jan Huntelaar left on the bench while both Robin van Persie and Wesley Sneijder are injured.

Likewise, Germany coach Joachim Loew, who was missing eight key players, opted to start midfielder Mario Goetze as a striker leading a youthful attack ahead of Thomas Mueller, Lewis Holtby and Marco Reus, the eldest at 23.

Messi draws a blank as Saudis hold Argentina

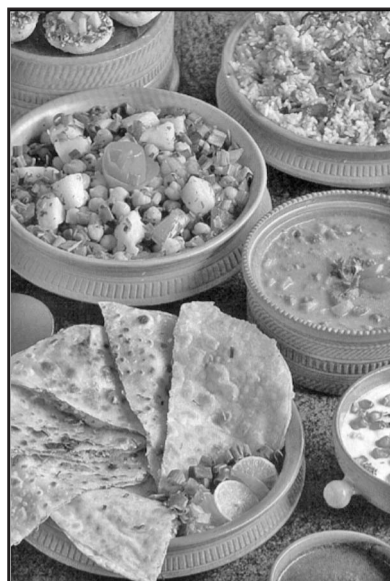
RIYADH (AFP) - Lionel Messi drew a rare blank on Wednesday as Argentina could only labour to a goalless draw with Saudi Arabia in a friendly here.

Messi's two goals for Barcelona in a weekend win over Real Mallorca gave the maestro 76 goals for 2012 to date, beating Pele's tally of 75 from 1958 and taking him to within nine of Gerd Mueller's all time record total of 85 set in 1972.

But he missed a chance to close down the deficit on Mueller as the Argentinians plodded to a stalemate in a match short on inspiration or major incident.

Messi thus also failed to move ahead of his 12 goals for the year in his national shirt - a goal here would have taken him beyond the 12 he shares with Gabriel Batistuta.

The Saudis, ranked 112 in the FIFA listings, could even have caused embarrassment to their illustrious visitors - only an offside decision robbed the hosts of a goal when Osama Al Harbi had an effort ch

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McIlroy vows no let-up in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (AFP) - Rory McIlroy begins the defence of his UBS Hong Kong Open crown on Thursday fresh from topping the European money list, vowing there will be no let-up as he seeks to end his season with a flourish.

The 23-year-old sealed the Race to Dubai at the weekend, courtesy of third place at the Singapore Open, becoming only the second man after Englishman Luke Donald to win both the European Tour and PGA Tour money titles in the same year.

During a fine season the Northern Irishman also won his second Major at the PGA Championship in August and just weeks later was part of the European Ryder Cup team that snatched a dramatic victory at Medinah.

"Hong Kong has always been a place I've enjoyed coming to," said the world number one. "It's always got a great buzz, a great atmosphere, and there is just something about Fanling and the Hong Kong Golf Club that I really enjoy."

"This week will be extra special after wrapping up The Race to Dubai last week in Singapore, and I can't wait to tee up as the defending cham-

pion this week."

No player has retained the Hong Kong Open title since Taiwan's Hsieh Yung-yo in 1964, but McIlroy has an enviable record at the event, finishing runner-up in 2008 and 2009, and tied for sixth in 2010.

"I've come close (to winning) a couple of times and last year I was lucky enough to finally get my first win here," said McIlroy, adding that he did not feel he had played his best golf in recent tournaments.

"Obviously I want to finish the year off as strongly as possible. It would be great to defend here and have a big conclusion in Dubai next week also."

Threats to McIlroy come from a trio of Major champions -- Pádraig Harrington, Paul Lawrie and Y.E. Yang -- as well as four-time PGA Tour winner Matt Kuchar and Matteo Manassero, fresh from winning the Singapore Open on Sunday.

Spain's Miguel Angel Jimenez and victorious Ryder Cup captain Jose Maria Olazabal are also in the field for the tournament, co-sanctioned by the Asian Tour and the European Tour.

Sweden beat England 4-2 in friendly



SWEDEN, Stockholm : Sweden's striker and team captain Zlatan Ibrahimovic (2nd L) celebrates with his teammates after scoring during the FIFA World Cup 2014 friendly match England vs Sweden in Stockholm, Sweden on November 14, 2012. (AFP)

Vonn suffering from intestinal pain

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Four-time overall alpine World Cup champion Lindsey Vonn was in hospital in Colorado Tuesday, suffering from "severe intestinal pain", her spokesman said.

Lewis Kay said Vonn has had the condition for about two weeks and that they are now waiting for test results.

Vonn cancelled a promotional event in Vail, Colorado on Friday because she did not feel well.

She also skipped a World Cup slalom in Finland at the weekend, preferring to prepare for the giant slalom and slalom set for Aspen, Colorado, on November 24-25.

Vonn, who has won four of the past five women's downhill season crowns, had hoped to compete against men at Lake Louise, Alberta, on November 24.

However, that request was turned down by the International Ski Federation.

Had she been permitted to compete against the men, Vonn would have missed the two women's races in Aspen that take place the same weekend.

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Melvin, Johnson win top manager awards

NEW YORK (AFP) - Oakland Athletics Bob Melvin and Washington Nationals Davey Johnson have been named Managers of the Year for the second time in their Major League Baseball careers.

Melvin previously won the Manager of the Year award while guiding the Arizona Diamondbacks in 2007 and Johnson won as skipper of the Baltimore Orioles in 1997.

The 51-year-old Melvin was named the American League's top manager after Oakland went from an 88-loss team in 2011 to a 94-68 record this past season.

Oakland trailed Texas by 13 games on June 30 before

overtaking the two-time defending division champion Rangers for the American League West title.

The A's finished the regular season with a half dozen consecutive wins, including a three-game sweep of Texas.

Melvin, who took over for Bob Geren midway through the 2011 season, beat out two other American League finalists, Baltimore's Buck Showalter and the Chicago White Sox' Robin Ventura.

The 70-year-old Johnson was credited with engineering the Nationals remarkable transformation after replacing Jim Riggleman halfway through the 2011 season.

Washington won an league-best 98 games this past season and captured the National League's East title for the franchise's first playoff spot since the Montreal Expos reached the National League championship series in 1981. The 98 wins marks an 18-game improvement over last year.

Johnson was chosen National League manager of the year over Cincinnati's Dusty Baker, and Bruce Bochy of the San Francisco Giants who went on to win the Major League Baseball's World Series championship.

Jackson slams Lakers for 'slimy' tactic



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - Phil Jackson has accused the Los Angeles Lakers of "slimy" negotiations in their search to fill the head coaching position left vacant by the firing of Mike Brown.

Jackson said he met Lakers' brass for 1 1/2 hours at his home on Saturday and was then woken by a phone call at midnight Sunday to tell him that Mike D'Antoni had been given the job instead.

"It seemed slimy to be awoken with this kind of news," Jackson told the Los Angeles Times. "It's just weird."

On Monday general manager Mitch Kupchak announced D'Antoni as the club's new coach on a reported three-year contract that includes a club option for a fourth.

"I wish it would have been

a little bit cleaner," Jackson said. "It would have been much more circum-spect and respectful of everybody that's involved."

The Lakers looked to continue their turnaround on Tuesday from an embarrassing

start but they dropped a close 84-82 decision to the San Antonio Spurs at Staples Center arena.

The Lakers began the National Basketball Association season with three consecutive losses and had just one win in five games under Brown, who was sacked last Friday.

Tuesday's loss was the Lakers' first defeat under interim coach Bernie Bickerstaff after winning their first two with the interim skipper.

Jackson, who has 11 overall NBA titles, was seen by some as the natural choice to replace Brown and fans chanted his name at recent games.

The 67-year-old led the Lakers to five NBA titles over two previous stints as head coach.

But he had wanted more control over basketball operations than during his last stint with the team.

So the Lakers chose to go with the 61-year-old D'Antoni, who is recovering from

knee replacement surgery and is expected to join the team later this week.

D'Antoni resigned as head coach of the New York Knicks in March, ending a four-year tenure there. "This team is built to win a championship this year or the next year," he said Tuesday.

"Our current roster is great and that is what gets me excited about coaching. I am going to do everything I can to win a championship. If we are not in the serious hunt, then I have failed."

The transition should be made smoother because of D'Antoni's previous work with all-star guards Kobe Bryant and Steve Nash.

Bryant worked with D'Antoni on the US Olympic team in London and D'Antoni coached Nash for five seasons with the Phoenix Suns.

Bryant said he initially told management his top choice for coach was D'Antoni.

When Jackson came into the picture, Bryant said he backed him as well. But when it was evident they were not going to pick Jackson, Bryant said management knew that he endorsed the pick of D'Antoni.

"I think we all thought it was going to be Phil," Bryant said earlier Tuesday. "I said D'Antoni was my first choice because I didn't know Phil would be an option."

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Red Sox hero Damon joins Team Thailand

BANGKOK (AFP) - Former Boston Red Sox hero Johnny Damon has followed his family roots to Thailand to help the baseball minnows qualify for a leading international tournament, a Thai sports official said on Tuesday. Big-hitting Damon, whose mother is Thai, will represent the kingdom in qualifiers for the World Baseball Classic, an official for the Amateur Baseball Association of Thailand told AFP.

"Coming to Thailand for him is like coming home," Juthabhon Phimphan said.

"He is the idol of Thai baseball players. He is a good morale boost and an inspiration for the athletes to improve," she added.





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The Divi Resort Beach Tennis Event is this weekend! Aruba to host the biggest International Beach Tennis bash ever



Beach tennis team with players from Brazil

Sjoerd de Vries, "the man who brought beach tennis to the western hemisphere," according to noted promoter and commentator Alex Querna, announced four day of sport action and fun will take up Eagle Beach beginning today at 9:00 a.m..

Sjoerd welcomed media to the site along the shore where 25 courts have been set up to accommodate 600 contenders for the International Beach Tennis 2012 championship titles. He also introduced Alex, producer and well known commentator from the U.S., Frank Udell,

assisting with organizing the event, and Adao and Joao, two players from Brazil in the international beach tennis circuit.

Players are split between 300 from Aruba, which has been the center for beach tennis for ten years and popularized the sport in the Americas. The other 600 players Italy, Holland, Spain, France Belgium, the U.S., Puerto Rico, Venezuela, Brazil and Chile. Matteo Marighella of Italy, aka "The Matrix", has returned to defend his title; "The King" has been the champion for four



years running.

Spectators are welcome to join the beach party that will be taking place through Sunday; there is no entrance fee. Matches are scheduled from 9:00 AM to 9:00 or 10:00 PM. Over the weekend there will be live music, stands selling inexpensive beer from sponsor Amstel Bright and food from Senor Frog's, along with a BBQ stand.

Sunday, beginning at 10:00 AM, will be the quarter and semi final matches; finals

will begin at 6:00 PM. for the Pro Ladies Final, followed by the Pro Men's Final. The Award Ceremony for the top prizes will take place on Monday evening, November 19, at Senor Frog's

Competition will be in five categories, Fun, Intermediate, Advanced and Pro, with a special Masters 50+ match. The Aruba National Cup event will take place on Friday evening at 8:00 PM. All final matches will be played on the center court,

surrounded by bleachers.

Beach tennis is an exciting sport to play and watch; it is a tough, demanding game and circuit players are top athletes. All are invited to come and enjoy the spectacle and competition over the next few days, as well as the convivial beach party ambiance.

For more information, and standings, visit their website, www.beachtennisaruba.com or their Facebook page.

By Rosalie Klein